THE

BAPTIST MAGAZINE.

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"Whatever is designed to fit *every thing* will fit nothing *well*."
DR. JOHNSON.

"Names are intended to distinguish things." Our Work is called THE BAPTIST MAGAZINE because it is intended to be a Repository for the Baptists' use.

Dialogue between an Editor and his Friend.

Friend. So I find you are determined on having a Baptist Magazine at all Events.

Editor. Truly, such is our determination. But by your expression, I am led to think you do not quite approve of the undertaking.

F. Indeed I do not. I have many objections against it. Some you would say are trivial, which yet have their Influence; but others are of moment, and I fear you have not well considered them.

E. Pray let me hear them, for I wish to see all sides of a Subject in which I am interested: and I confess that such a Magazine is with me, as well as many of my Brethren, a favourite object. What have you to say against it?

F. You are aware that speaking against a favourite object is a daring exploit, yet if you will hear me patiently, I will produce three especial objections which I think you will not be able to repel.

E. I know you will speak candidly, and I have lived too long in this world to be angry with another because he entertains a different opinion respecting an object which to me appears desirable. What is your first objection?

F. To be plain with you, I do not approve of the *Title*. It will be deemed bigotted and invidious by many, and I think, to say the least, *plausibly* so.

E. Doubtless many will give their opinion on this, as well as on other subjects, without the least exercise of their Understandings

relative thereto; but you would think it very ridiculous if their Sentiments were permitted to have any weight in our decisions. Will you answer me a few questions?

F. I am ready to hear them and tell you what I think.

E. Suffer me first to remark that our Denomination includes several hundred Congregations, comprising many thousand individuals. —Respecting these, there are many interesting occurrences, which, if communicated, would call into exercise some of the best emotions of the heart among their numerous Brethren, but they are lost for want of a common Receptacle wherein they may be deposited, so that it cannot be said that *the whole body is knit together by that which every joint supplieth.* Now let me ask, Is there any thing invidious or bigotted in such a body of Christians having a repository in which the memory of departed excellence may be embalmed, the effusions of living piety treasured up, and passing events recorded as a warning or a stimulus to the present generation, as well as to afford a gratifying Review to those who shall come after us?

F. I do not now object to the design of giving such a work to the Public, but as I said before, I dislike the *Title.*

E. And I have no partiality to a *Title,* if you can furnish us with a better, do it. But you ought to understand that the work is not given to the *Public,* nor even to the *religious* Public; it is intended to be a Magazine for the use and benefit of the Baptists. Through the exercise of *their* talents we hope to see it respectable, and on *their* Patronage we rely for its support.

F. Well, if that is the state of the case, you may as well call it THE BAPTIST MAGAZINE, for I can find no other terms that will describe it so well.

E. Thank you; you have cut short my string of interrogations by a timely surrender. Will you now give me your second objection? Perhaps that is more weighty.

F. I know not what you may think of it, but with myself and many others, it has increasing influence. It certainly will appear like *a work of Opposition,* and if that fire should be once lighted up, you may sooner burn your fingers than put it out again.

E. I have heard of that objection before, and am told that many join in the cry of *Opposition—It is an Opposition.* But when I obtain a hearing and request an explanation, I cannot prevail on them to tell me explicitly what it is they mean. If they mean any thing to the purpose by this expression in the present instance, it must be that there are others already engaged in the same object, and that we shall *oppose* them by dividing the attention of the parties concerned. If this *is* the the meaning of those who assert that a Baptist Magazine will be a work of Opposition; I ask them, an opposition to whom, or to what? Is there in existence any popular work, the avowed design or natural tendency of which is to cultivate Christian

Union and affection among the Members of the Baptist denomination, and to blend with their Principles such a portion of firmness, zeal, and liberality as shall make them lovely and useful Members of the general Body? If no such popular work exists, then we have nothing to oppose, in the sense of these objectors, for THIS is *our* principal design.

F. I own I had not entered into your Views of this Subject; and I still apprehend that some of your Brethren of other Denominations will regard your attempt in the light I have mentioned.

E. Very likely, till they shall be better informed. But they may be assured that our best Wishes attend their every effort to serve the Cause of their and our Redeemer, and we do sincerely rejoice in the Success the Lord has given to all their labours. As for Opposition to them, we assuredly intend none. We think that the right State of our hearts towards all Christians will be best evidenced by our assiduous exertions to increase the spirituality and loveliness of our own Circle. Whilst we are pursuing this object, where is the liberal-minded Christian who will say we are in the Spirit of Opposition to his designs?

F. I confess I am satisfied on this point, and I wish you may be able to satisfy others, who on this account indulge supicions respecting your undertaking.

E. If they will not understand our design, we shall be sorry to consign them over to the unpleasant feelings resulting from the Idea of being unkindly opposed in a good work. As for ourselves, we shall not consider others as in a State of opposition against us, but as fellow-labourers, in a different Circle of the same Cause, in which there is more than room enough for all our exertions. I think you mentioned a third objection.

F. I did so, and all that you have been saying gives it additional Weight. In such an undertaking as you have described, you will stand in need of the first-rate abilities—Of Men whose discretion, integrity and candour, shall be a pledge of their impartiality, and that with whatever care they cherish the interests of our own Denomination, they will manifest equal solicitude to wound nothing (save the morbid feelings) belonging to their Brethren who differ from them. If your writers be clear without being cold, their warmth should be without extravagance—if they be plain without being trite, they should be spirited without acrimony. Have you secured such assistance? Excuse the enquiry, for as your object gains upon my approbation, I feel a degree of anxiety respecting its success. It seems to require the combined effort of all our Denomination.

E. An attempt to obtain that were hopeless in the outset of such a work; our design, in this respect, embraces no more than the opening a receptable in which genius and piety may deposit their occasional productions. We are grateful that our avowed Patronage

places our prospects above contempt, and if it shall appear that some of our ablest writers cannot afford us the assistance we could wish, because they are laudably engaged in works of greater importance, however we may regret the want of their aid, we are not disposed to let one Talent lay idle whose exercise may conduce to the general welfare. It is true that we earnestly and affectionately invite the assistance of the best of our writers, because we are conscious that the object of our exertions is worthy of their aid; but we are not ashamed to own, that for the attainment of our desires, we depend more on the blessing of him who commanded his Disciples *to gather up the* FRAGMENTS *that nothing be lost.*

F. His Blessing I sincerely wish you may have, and let all who wish well to the Cause of God and of Truth, say Amen.

F.

We have been favoured with an Article, the production of a learned Pædobaptist in America, lately published at the end of Seven Sermons on the Mode and Subjects of Baptism. The Author graduated at Dartmouth College, 1789, and was ordained over a pædobaptist Church at Sedgwick, 1793. Several Circumstances leading him to investigate the ground on which he had practised Infant Baptism, the result was a renunciation of his error in that respect, and he delivered his reasons in the Sermons just mentioned; in consequence of which the Church at Sedgwick unanimously sent for some Baptist Ministers to administer that ordinance and constitute them a Baptist Church; and on the 13th of May, 1805, we are informed they repaired to the water's side. The place fixed upon for the administration of this solemn ordinance was in the tide waters of Benjamin's River, about one mile from the sea.

"As soon as the people were assembled at the water's side, solemn prayer was offered up to that God whose ordinance we were going to attend. A profound silence reigned through the assembly, when Mr. Baldwin took Mr. Merrill by the hand, and walking slowly into the water, repeated these words, *And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him.* When they had gotten to a suitable depth, the ordinance was performed. Mr. Merrill, rising from the watery grave with a very pleasant, smiling countenance, could not refrain expressing the heart-felt satisfaction he enjoyed in this act of obedience. As they ascended out of the water, Mr. Williams went down with Mrs. Merrill, repeating these words, *And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.* In this way the baptizing was conducted, until all the candidates present were baptized. Here, we beheld sixty-six persons buried in baptism by these two administrators, in forty-two minutes. The candidates, both females as

well as males, descended into the water with the greatest calmness imaginable; and in general they came out of it rejoicing in such a manner as we have seldom seen. Numbers of them could not refrain giving glory to God our Saviour, who by his own example marked out this humble, blessed way. The spectators behaved with the utmost propriety. They were not only solemn, but many of them were in tears. A heart must be adamant not to have softened at such a scene. The service was concluded by prayer and singing."

We give our Readers this Article intire not only because it contains several interesting particulars respecting the Baptists, not generally known, but as it affords a curious specimen of the state of Letters in America in the beginning of the 19th century. There are several important observations and criticisms in the Sermons, which being new on this side the Atlantic, may hereafter find a place in our Pages.

A Miniature History of the Baptists.

IT may be pleasing to some of my readers to be presented with a brief account of the Baptists. I shall extract this account from the writings of those who were not of the Baptist denomination, but rather prejudiced against them.

Here it may be observed, that the religious sect, called Baptists, have caused the learned world more perplexity and research to decypher their origin, than any other sect of Christians, or, perhaps, than all others. Yes, this reseach hath baffled all their erudition in ancient story.

It is not diffiult to fix the period when one sect of this denomination was first called Petrobrusians, when another was known by the name of Waterlandians, when a third was denominated Mennonites, &c. But the difficulty is this, to ascertain the time, place and medium, by which Christ's disciples were led to adopt the peculiar sentiment, which is now held by those called Baptists, and which distinguishes them from all other denominations.

It may be farther observed, that if no one, however learned and wise, be able to trace this sect to any beginning short of the days of the Apostles, or of Christ, it is possible that it then arose. Besides, if all other religious denominations, or the Pædobaptists, who include all which are not Baptists, can be traced to a probable origin short of the Apostles, and the Baptists cannot be so traced, it affords still more probability, that they might have arisen then.

It ought to be particularly noted, that my object is not to give the history of a *name*, but of a *Principle*. I shall not contend who were first called Baptists, Anabaptists, Mennonites, or the like; but who have held the peculiar sentiment which is adopted by those

who are called Baptists. Wherever we find this principle, there we find the men, the Christians, who, had they lived in our day, would be styled Baptists. Nor is the present enquiry this, Whence came that *mode* of baptism, which is practised by all, who are known by the name Baptists? For this mode is granted, generally, if not universally, by all learned and honest men, to be as ancient as John the Baptist and the Apostles. This mode is, indeed, not peculiar to the Baptists, for the Pædobaptists, for many centuries, practised this mode; and the majority of them, do, to this day, practise immersion.

The peculiar characteristic of the Baptists is this: They hold, that the ordinance of baptism is to be administered to adults, or to visible believers only.

One natural consequence of this principle is, when any one who was baptized, or sprinkled, in his infancy, comes over to the Baptists' sentiment, they require him to be baptized. Hence they are called Anabaptists. Another very natural consequence is, this sentiment constrains the Baptists to oppose the baptism of infants. Hence they are distinguished by the name of Antipædobaptists.

I add one observation more, and that is, Whenever and wherever I find persons, who hold the peculiar, characteristic sentiment of the Baptists, I shall call them by that name. Their history now follows.

I. The origin of the Baptists can be found no where, unless it be conceded that it was at Jordan, or Enon.

Dr. Mosheim, in his history of the Baptists, says, "The *true origin* of that sect which acquired the denomination of the Anabaptists by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who come over to their communion, and derived that of Mennonites from the famous man to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, is *hid* in the *remote depths* of *antiquity*, and is of consequence extremely difficult to be ascertained."

Here, Dr. Mosheim, as learned an historian, though not so candid a one, as the science of letters can boast, bears positive testimony, that the origin of the Baptists is hidden in the *remote depths of antiquity*. Nothing is more evident than this; the Doctor either knew not their origin, or was not candid enough to confess it. At least we have this conclusion, that he could find their origin no where short of the Apostles.

II. A large number of the Baptists were scattered, oppressed, and persecuted, through many, if not through all, the nations of Europe, before the dawn of the reformation under Luther and Calvin. When Luther, seconded by several princes of the petty states of Germany, arose in opposition to the over-grown usurpations of the church of Rome, the Baptists also arose from their hiding places. They hoped that what they had been long expecting and praying for was now at

the door; the time in which the sufferings of God's people should be greatly terminated: but God had not raised Luther's views of reformation to the height the Baptists were expecting. Their detestation of the Mother of Harlots owing to their bitter experience of her cruelties, and the clear gospel light with which they had been favoured above Luther, and their ardent desire to be utterly delivered from her cruel oppressions, made them wish to carry the reformation farther than God had appointed Luther to accomplish. They were soon disappointed in Luther, and probably did not duly appreciate the reformation which he was instrumental in effecting. It was as might have been expected; the Lutherans and the Baptists fell out by the way; and Calvin, if not Luther, warmly opposed them. *See Mosheim, Cent.* XVI. *Cap.* iii. *Sect.* 3. *Part* 2.

Mosheim, vol. IV. page 427; speaking of the Baptists, says, "This sect started up all of a sudden, in several countries, at the same point of time, and at the very period when the first contests of the reformers with the Roman Pontifs drew the attention of the world." From this we have one plain and fair deduction; that the Baptists were before the reformation under Luther and Calvin, and therefore did not take their rise from the Enthusiasts under Munzer and Storck, or at that time; or at Munster.

III. The Hussites, in the fifteenth century, the Wickliffites, in the fourteenth, and the Petrobrusians, in the twelfth, and the Waldenses, were all Baptists.* To this fact Dr. Mosheim bears the following testimony. "It may be observed that the Mennonites (i. e. the Baptists of East and West Friesland, Holland, Gelderland, Brabant, Westphalia, and other places in the North of Europe) are *not entirely mistaken*, when they boast their descent from the Waldenses, Petrobrusians, and other *ancient* sects who are usually considered as *witnesses* of the *truth* in times of universal darkness and superstition. Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay *concealed* in *almost all* the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland, and Germany, many persons, who adhered tenaciously to the following doctrine, which the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites had maintained; some in a more disguised, and others in a more open and public manner, *That the kingdom of Christ, or the visible church he had established upon earth, was an assembly of true and real saints, and ought therefore to be inaccessible to the wicked and unrighteous, and also to be exempt from all those institutions which human prudence suggests to oppose the progress of Iniquity, or to correct and reform transgressors.* This maxim is the true source of all the peculiarities that are to be found in the religious doctrine and discipline of the Mennonites, (or Baptists in the North of Europe) and it is most certain that the *greatest part* of these *peculiarities* were approved of by many of those who, before the dawn of the

* Not all, every one; but all, generally.

reformation, entertained the notion already mentioned relating to the visible church of Christ." *Vol.* IV. *pp.* 428, 429.

From this testimony of Dr. Mosheim we may remark—

1. That the Mennonites were Baptists, or Anabaptists, for these different names he uses to express one and the same thing.

2. That the Petrobrusians were Baptists; for the Baptists assert, and Mosheim allows it, that they were their progenitors in principle and practice. Besides, in his history of the twelfth century, part II. chap. v. sect. 7, he expressly tells us, that one of their tenets was, *that no persons whatsoever were to be baptized before they were come to the full use of their reason.*

3. That the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites were Baptists; for, as Mosheim says, they all held to the great and leading maxim, which is the true source of all the peculiarities that are to be found in the religious doctrine and discipline of the Mennonites. These several denominations of Christians were not known by the ancient modern and appropriate name, Baptists. But their doctrine and discipline were the same with our Baptists, and were they now living they would be thus called.

4. That in the sixteenth century the Waldenses, Petrobrusians, and other ancient sects (i. e. of the Baptists) were usually considered as having been witnesses of the truth, in the times of darkness and universal superstition. How differently from this do many consider them in our day!

5. That before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland and Germany, many persons who held the same doctrine and discipline with the Baptists in our day, and were, of necessary and fair consequence, of the same denomination.

IV. We have already traced the Baptists up to the twelfth century. We have also found that they were scattered over almost all the countries of Europe, and were, in the dark ages of popery, the witnesses of the truth; or have been usually thus considered. Besides, we have found that the Waldenses were, in principle and practice, Baptists. We will now see to what origin we can trace the Waldenses.

Dr. Maclaine, who translated Mosheim's church history from the original Latin, gives us, vol. III. pages 118, 119, under note G, the following history of the Waldenses. His words are, "We may venture to affirm the contrary (i. e. from what Mosheim had just said of the Waldenses taking their name from Peter Waldus) with Beza and other writers of note; for it seems evident, from the best records, that Valdus derived his name from the true Valdenses of Piedmont, whose doctrine he adopted, and who were known by the name of Vaudois or Valdenses, before he, or his immediate followers, existed. If the Valdenses, or Waldenses, had derived their name from any

eminent teacher, it would probably have been from Valdo, who was remarkable for the purity of his doctrine, in the ninth century, and was the cotemporary and chief counsellor of Berengarius. But the truth is, that they derive their name from their vallies in Piedmont, which in their language are called Vaux. Hence Vaudois, their true name; Hence Peter, (or, as others call him, John) of Lyons, was called in Latin Valdus, because he had adopted their doctrine; and hence the term Valdenses and Waldenses, used by those who write in English or Latin, in the place of Vaudois. The bloody Inquisitor Reinerus Sacco, who exerted such a furious zeal for the destruction of the Waldenses, lived but about eighty years after Valdus of Lyons, and must therefore be supposed to know whether or not he was the real founder of the Waldenses, or Leonists; and yet it is remarkable that he speaks of the Leonists as a sect that had flourished about five hundred years; nay, mentions authors of note, who make their antiquity go back to the apostolic age. *See the account given of Sacco's book by the Jesuit Gretser in the Bibliotheca Patrum.* I know not upon what principle Dr. Mosheim maintains that the inhabitants of the vallies of Piedmont are to be carefully distinguished from the Waldenses; and I am persuaded that whoever will be at the pains to read attentively *the 2nd, 26th and 27th chapters of the first book of Leger's Histoire des Eglises Vaudoises,* will find this distinction entirely groundless.—When the Papists ask us where our religion was before Luther, we generally answer, in the Bible, and we answer well. But to gratify their taste for tradition, and human authority, we may add to this answer—and in the vallies of Piedmont."

To the above we may add, one of the Popish writers, speaking of the Waldenses, says, "*The heresy of the Waldenses is the oldest heresy in the world.*"*

It is here worthy to be particularly noticed—

1. That Reinerus Sacco speaks of the Waldenses, or Baptists, of his day, as a sect that had, at that time flourished for about five hundred years; which brings the existence of the Baptists, as a religious sect, up to the fifth century.

2. That this same Reinerus Sacco mentions authors of note, who make the antiquity of the Waldensean Baptists go back to the apostolic age.

3. That the Baptists are the most ancient of all the religious sects, who have set themselves to oppose the ghostly powers of the Romanists.

4. That, if there be any body of Christians, who have existed during the reign of antichrist, or of the man of sin, the Baptists have been this living Church of Jesus Christ.

5. The consequence of the whole is this: The Baptists have no

* In President Edwards's History of Redemption, p. 267.

origin short of the Apostles. They arose in the days of John the Baptist, and increased largely in the days of our blessed Saviour and in the days of his Apostles, and have existed, under the severest oppressions, with intervals of prosperity, ever since.

But as to the Pædobaptists, their origin is at once traced to about the middle of the second century; when the mystery of iniquity not only began to work, but, by its fermentation, had produced this error of fruitful evils, namely, that baptism was essential to salvation; yes, that it was regeneration. Hence arose the necessity of baptizing children. Now comes forward Irenæus, and informs that the church had a *tradition* from the Apostles to give baptism to infants. We are told in the Appendix to Mosheim's Church History, that one of the *remarkable* things which took place in the second century was the baptizing of infants, it being never known before, as a Christian ordinance for them.

What a pity it is, that good men, who have renounced the error, which was, as church history informs us, the progenitor of infant-baptism, should still retain its practical and erroneous offspring to the prejudice and marring of the church of God! Not a single sect of the Pædobaptists can find its origin nearer to the Apostles than the second century. We hence conclude, that their origin was there, and that they then and there arose in the mystery which was then working.

V. The following is the testimony which President Edwards bears in favour of the Waldenses and other faithful ones, who were scattered through all parts of Europe in the dark ages of Popery.

"In every age of this dark time, there appeared particular persons in all parts of Christendom, who bore a testimony against the corruptions and tyranny of the church of Rome. There is no one age of antichrist, even in the darkest time of all, but ecclesiastical historians mention a great many by name, who manifested an abhorrence of the Pope and his idolatrous worship. God was pleased to maintain an uninterrupted succession of witnesses, through the whole time, in Germany, France, Britain, and other countries, as historians demonstrate, and mention them by name, and give an account of the testimony which they held. Many of them were private persons, and many of them ministers, and some magistrates and persons of great distinction. And there were numbers in every age, who were persecuted and put to death for this testimony.

"Besides these particular persons, dispersed here and there, there was a certain people, called the Waldenses, who lived separate from all the rest of the world, who kept themselves pure, and constantly bore a testimony against the church of Rome, though all this dark time. The place where they dwelt was the Vaudois, or the five vallies of Piedmont, a very mountainous country between Italy and France. The place where they lived was compassed with those ex-

ceeding high mountains, called the Alps, which are almost impassable. The passage over these mountainous, desert countries, was so difficult, that the vallies where this people dwelt were almost inaccessible. There this people lived for many ages, as it were alone; where, in a state of separation from all the world, having very little to do with any other people, they served God in the ancient purity of his worship, and never submitted to the church of Rome. This place, in this desert, mountainous country, probably was the place, especially meant in the xii. chap. of Revelations, 6 verse, as the place prepared of God for the woman, that they should feed her there during the reign of Antichrist."

"Some of the Popish writers themselves own that that people never submitted to the church of Rome. One of the Popish writers, speaking of the Waldenses, says, the heresy of the Waldenses is the oldest heresy in the world. It is supposed, that this people first betook themselves to this desert, secret place among the mountains to hide themselves from the severity of the heathen persecutions, which were before Constantine the Great, and thus the woman fled into the Wilderness from the face of the serpent, *Revelations* xii. 6. and so verse 14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time from the face of the serpent. And the people being settled there, their posterity continued there from age to age afterwards, and being as it were by natural walls, as well as by God's grace, separated from the rest of the world, never partook of the overflowing corruption."

It is hoped that the reader will very carefully and candidly compare what is testified to us by three very learned men, Dr. Mosheim, Dr. Maclaine, and President Edwards. The testimony of the first is, that the Waldenses and many others who are *usually considered as witnesses of the truth* in the times of *universal darkness* and *superstition*, were essentially agreed with the Baptists of modern date, as to *principle* and *practice*, or as to the great maxim, whence flow all the peculiarities of that denomination. His testimony, in short, is this; the Hussites, the Wickliffites, the Petrobrusians and the Waldenses, with other witnesses of the truth, scattered over Europe, in the dark ages of Popery, were essentially the same with the Baptists of later times; or that they all were what we call Baptists.

Dr. Maclaine testifies that the Waldenses flourished as early as the fifth century; yes, he informs us that some authors of note carry their antiquity up to the apostolic age.

President Edwards informs us that these Waldenses were the main body of the church in the dark ages, and have been, together with their scattered brethren, the pure church of Jesus Christ, during the reign of Antichrist, and, of certain consequence, were the successors

of the pure Church, from the days of Christ and his Apostles.

The fair consequence of all this is, that the Baptists have been the uninterrupted Church of our Lord from the Apostles' day to ours.

I may, indeed, exclaim, What have I been believing, what have I been doing, with respect to the Baptists all my days? I know, and I confess, that the history of the church assures me, that the denomination of Christians to which I have belonged, and to which I do still visibly belong, came through the church of Rome, and was broken off from the mother of harlots, and it is not greatly to be wondered at, if all her filth should not yet be wiped away. At the same time, the same history assures me, that the Baptists never have submitted to her superstitions and filthy abominations.

In this short History of the Baptists, we see the continued accomplishment of one of Christ's promissory predictions, which is *Matt.* xvi. 18. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church. That denomination of Christians which are called Baptists, are the only known society of professing Christians, against which Satan hath not prevailed, either in point of doctrine, or discipline, or both. This church, or old and inveterate heresy, as Satan would call it, he acknowledges, by the mouth of his servants the Romanists, that he could never subdue. It is true, Satan hath joined many of his legions to it, as he did many false brethren to the disciples in the days of the Apostles. But he hath never, no, not for an hour, prevailed upon this ancient and primitive church to give up the doctrines of grace, or the administration of the ordinances as Christ delivered them to his people.

That which she first received, she still holds fast, and will. In all the history of the church, we read of no other body of professing Christians, after which Satan hath cast such a continual flood of waters; but hitherto the earth hath helped the woman, and the flood of persecution hath not prevailed. Neither shall it ever prevail.

On keeping the Ordinances as delivered.

It will be expected, Mr. Editor, that this new stranger, when he makes his appearance, will come in the Spirit and Power of him whose name he bears. That he should be *to the world* "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," But when he comes *to his own*, he will bring to them a word of consolation, saying, "Brethren, I praise "you, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances "as I delivered them." An ordinance is a positive command of God. There are two things in which the positive and moral commands of the Deity may or do differ. First, a moral thing is com-

manded because it is right to be done, but a positive command is to be obeyed only because it is commanded. They differ also in this, that a positive command may be abrogated, which a moral one can never be.

To keep the Ordinances as they were delivered, it is necessary that they be *kept to the same Subjects.* To believers, and them only, the Ordinances of the New Testament belong. We have equal authority to apply the promises unconditionally to the unbelieving, as to administer to them the Ordinances of God. In both cases we should take the Children's meat and cast it to the dogs. Thus run the divine Testimonies, He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. Then* they that *gladly received his word* were baptized. The Ordinances of the Gospel were never delivered to such as cannot understand their design, nor as a key to enable a man to find his way into office.

The Ordinance, if kept as delivered, should be *confined to the original manner of administration.* If ever so trifling an alteration be made in any of the Institutions of God, they continue no longer his, but become ever after the Institutions of him who made the alteration. This makes it of great Importance that we attend, as it were, to the pattern shewed us in the Mount. Seeing that in the days of John, of Christ, and of his Apostles, those who were baptized all went down into the water, came up out of the water—were buried with Christ in Baptism, and arose with him to newness of life; suffer neither the pretence of indecency, the influence of tradition, nor human example to lead you, brethren, to forsake or be ashamed of the Ordinances of Christ.

Again, to keep the Ordinances as they were delivered, it is necessary that we *confine them to their original design.* To shew our subjection to the King of Zion—To make a public profession that we are dead to sin and alive to God,—that the Death and Resurrection of Christ are the grounds of our hope of pardon and eternal life, are the ends to be accomplished by the Ordinances of Christ. If, therefore, we administer Baptism to wash away the sins of the party, or to transform a Sinner into a Saint, we lose both the end that Christ had in view in the Institution, and our own in its administration. And so of the Lord's Supper; when it leads us back to Calvary, to discern the Lord's body as broken for sin, and to behold him as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, and thus encourages our reliance on the efficacy of his Death, we keep to the design of the Holy Spirit. But if we convert the bread and wine into a religious dose, that will cleanse us from sin in the same manner as medicine does from disease, and if we administer it to a dying Sinner to transform him into a Saint, we totally deviate from the design of the Institution.

For your keeping close to the letter and spirit of the divine Insti-

tutions, and thus by your conduct bearing testimony against all innovation, you may be reproached by the world, to balance which, you shall inherit the praise of heaven. A praise that when Superstition and Will-worship shall die by the breath of Christ, Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but his praise shall not pass away.

T. B.

New-Year Thoughts

On Ephes. v. 16. "*Redeeming the Time because the days are evil.*"

Time is a sacred Trust, given us by the Author of our being, to be improved to his honour. We are every hour dependent upon his favour, and our Character is that of servants, to whom he has committed an appointed work. Our Time, therefore belongs to our Master and not to ourselves. To redeem signifies to recover what is lost, or to retrieve what has been wasted. This cannot be literally applied to Time, but in a figure may intend that we make the best possible use of the remainder: even as a Servant who has idled away all the Morning, must labour hard to complete the work of the Day.

And is it so, that a great part of our Time has been wasted and is lost? If any doubt it, let them pause and enquire what work they have done as the Servants of God? Instead of good have they not done much evil? Reader, all the time of your unregenerate State has been *worse* than lost. Though you had the means of Grace, and Mercy followed you every day; yet you brought forth no fruit unto God! Are you passed from death unto life? hath your Master distinguished you by setting you apart for himself, to shew forth his praise? Even since that day in which he hired you and bade you go work in his Vineyard, reflect how much of his Time you have wasted in sinful indulgences, doing little or nothing for God! How much more have you lost in idle amusements! we mean in all those instances wherein you have sought amusement, not as a relaxation from labours that had wasted your energy, and with the purpose of renewing your vigour for greater exertions in his service, but in which you have sought amusement and relaxation for their own sakes. All the Time so employed is utterly lost Time. To this you must add all the hours you have spent in fruitless cares, by which, whatever was their object, you have not been able to make one hair black or white. Perhaps that portion of your time, which of all others has been most foolishly wasted, has been the hours you have spent under the fearful apprehension of evils which never came to pass. Our Lord especially instructed his disciples to take no such thought for the morrow.

Now, Reader, cast up the Sum of your lost Time. The years be-

fore conversion, the periods since wasted in slothful indulgence, idle amusements, and fruitless cares, how *much* is entirely lost! The voice of another expired year gives energy to the language of Inspiration, REDEEM THE TIME—Make the best of the future.

Supposing you inclined religiously to regard the exhortation, we do not present you with any *particular Rules* for that purpose, but merely suggest for your aid some *general Principles* for making the best of Time. We hope this method may be adapted to more general usefulness, as Principles are capable of universal application.

In the first place, we counsel our Readers in general, at the very outset, to *see to it that matters be right between God and themselves, that their whole way of living, and the objects they aim at, be pleasing in his sight.* This advice is not foreign to the present Subject, but exceedingly necessary, for otherwise the future Time will be all lost; and the greater their zeal and diligence the farther they will be from God. As racers who run out of the prescribed course, the greater their speed the more widely they recede from the mark. O Reader, if conscious, that your ways are not right before God, how can you redeem the Time? Or, if a painful doubt invades the bosom as these lines meet the eye, O hasten to the Saviour's feet, commit your soul to his care, intreat him to take your heart in hand and fashion its affections according to his will.

We next advise all such as the Saviour has introduced into the way of life, to *see that their Motives be right in all that they do.* Otherwise, some may pray long, others may preach loud, and many may go through the round of all the Ordinances of another Year, and the Time thus spent be entirely lost, bringing no glory to God. *Let the eye be single, and the whole body will be full of light.* Purity of Motive will help you to serve God in relaxation as well as labour, when engaged in temporal concerns as well as in religious worship. You will not labour to amass or shine, but to provide things honest, and to give to him that needeth. In this way you will *do all to the glory of God,* for *as the plowing of the wicked is sin,* so *the labour of the Righteous is blessed.*

It is necessary to add, *Let no Time be spent in a way that in no respect shall tend to glorify God, or upon which you cannot ask a divine blessing.* Such enquiries as, Can I pray for this?—that God would prosper this undertaking?—that he would bless this amusement? would frequently restrain irregular desires, and have the happiest effect in our increasing conformity to the divine Will.

Again, we affectionately urge those who would make the best of Time, *When you are right, keeep right;* that is, keep near to God; for a believer is never right but when his *fellowship is with the Father and with the Lord Jesus Christ.* Hath God granted you this privilege; let it be the supreme object of your care and contrivance to maintain your intercourse with heaven. Every man has some su-

preme object, to which all others bend and become subordinate. Men of this World say, I *must* do so and so, and as to other affairs, I will attend to them if I can get time. Christian, let your supreme object be communion with your God, let secret devotion be the thing that *must* be attended to; for if once *that* become a kind of bye concern, to be regarded as you have Time, not only will Time be unprofitably wasted, but the welfare of the Soul is endangered. Wherefore, *seek first the kingdom of God.*

Lastly. *Let every thing be done in its appointed time.* Business requires order, if it be well conducted. Manage all your affairs in a regular manner, and have a *season* for Religion. Regulate your other engagements so as to have Time for your supreme object, and whatever you do for God, do it with all your heart. Your Father's language is *Give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my precepts.*

The Reason on which the Apostle founds his exhortation to redeem the Time, is particularly worthy of your regard, *for the days are evil.* Whether he intended moral or physical evil may be uncertain, we may include both. Suppose the former, then the import of the language is, Servants of God, the World is full of Sin; ye are called to lessen its influence and to oppose its progress. Redeem the Time. A mere glance upon the State of the World, the Church, your Families, or your own Souls, will convince you there is no more Time to be squandered away, each of them presents powerful motives urging you to be *instant in season and out of season, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

Suppose that physical evil is intended, then the reasoning is to this effect. Man is born to trouble, the great part of his existence here is exposed to affliction of various kinds; wherefore make the most of intervals. Reader, have you a vigorous frame? the seeds of disease may be lurking therein, use it therefore, while you have it, use it for God: even should you be singularly favoured with perpetual health; old age and decrepitude will arrive, even the years in which desire shall fail, and in which you shall find no pleasure. Your powers of body and mind will soon be worn out, and you will become feeble and useless. Wherefore, Redeem the Time; do what you intend to do speedily, for the day is advancing upon you wherein you can do nothing. Or, If you have a Competency of this world's goods, perhaps it may not be so always; these are days in which worldly possessions are held by a very precarious tenure, they make to themselves wings and flee away: therefore do good while it is in the power of your hand. We have known some, who seeing the precariousness of riches, seem determined to take care of themselves, but what shall they do when God taketh away their treasure wherein they trusted? or how shall they render an account. Let Christians always bear in mind the wise man's coun-

sel. *Give a portion to six, and also to seven, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* Z.

The Unprofitable Speculation, or, Much sown and little gathered.

Containing Reflections on Haggai i. 6.

No attentive observer can fail of perceiving the connection which God has established between moral conduct and its result. Certain actions produce certain consequences. As the produce of the harvest corresponds with the nature of the seed, so real piety must eventually meet with its appropriate reward, and vice with its merited condemnation.

Life is the great seed time of Immortality as Youth is the seed time of Life; and our future felicity beyond the Grave and on this side of it, will depend on the nature and quality of the moral seed we sow. What a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Let us consider how the language of the prophet Haggai, "Ye have sown much and bring in little," is fulfilled in the conduct of the great mass of Mankind.

Men sow much in their *laborious exertions* after worldly enjoyment, and bring in little. The divine Being has furnished us with two powers or instruments of happiness, Time and Talent, and observe, in the pursuit of earthly good, how they are employed. Eager to seize every moment and exact something from every hour, Men rise up early and sit up late. In the morning of life when active vigour strengthens every limb and Health breathes her influence in every gale, how eagerly do they form connections to secure success in the pursuit of business, the ways of pleasure, and the paths of ambition.

Observe the man of *Business* when his every thought is occupied upon the world, and he is seeking only the interests of the present state. With what earnestness and regularity will he arrange his plans, watch his dependants, and study every essential manœuvre of Trade. His ardent mind wearies his sinking body, and while exacting a tribute of labour from every moment, he "sows much and brings in a little."

Pursue the man of *Pleasure* through the guilty career of extravagance and dissipation. Though rosy health once smiled upon him, but has now left him the prey of feebleness and langour, though he once enjoyed the "the sunshine of the breast," but now tempestuous

and guilty passions rend his soul, and shake down the unripe fruits of enjoyment; yet in spite of fading vigour, the remonstrances of Conscience, and the voice of God, he perseveres. But he rather *labours after* happiness than enjoys it. He daily feels an increasing necessity to devise new modes of indulgence, because others grow insipid, till at length, urged only merely by the force of habit, he seeks guilty indulgences chiefly as a refuge from Despair. "The way of Transgressors is hard."

Notice the *ambitious* person. If he pursue his object *publicly*, he must encounter dangers and deaths, weariness and hardships; the ascent of glory is rugged and steep, he must sow much to reap little: if *privately*, he must walk in a more circuitous path, he must practise innumerable flatteries, he must be obsequious to one and compliant to another; he must expect to be frequently out-witted and superseded, and submit to be tossed about as the bauble and plaything of capricious power, till by dint of struggle and flattery he obtain an unenviable eminence where tempests perpetually gather and burst in floods of defamation on his head. It is doubtful whether he will find it most difficult to gain or to preserve his elevation, and perhaps after a life spent in the struggles of competition, at the moment of acquiring the fancied good, old age renders it tasteless, or Death snatches him away.

Further, Mankind "sow much" in their *expectations* of worldly felicity, but "bring in little." Hope invariably gilds the future with the brightest, but alas, most fading colours. There is no one perhaps but has in this respect been frequently self deceived; has erected fabrics of happiness on cobweb foundations, and has lived to be ashamed of his hopes.

In this men act contrary to *Analogy*, *Reason*, and *Religion*.

Moral Analogy or Experience proves the fallacy of human expectations and demonstrates that "he builds too low who builds beneath the skies." Not only has every one felt disappointment himself, but has had opportunity of seeing the unsuccessful experiments of his neighbours. History exhibits to our view all that the world could do for the greatest of men. It represents them to us as unhappy in the midst of pleasure, poor in the midst of splendor, solitary and forsaken, suspicious and wretched in the midst of society, the possessions of ambition, and the obsequiousness of adulation. Disappointment generates cruelty, and maddens them into demons. We hear a Caligula wishing that all the Roman people could be united into one head that he might strike it off at a blow—and a poor emaciated and dying Tiberius expressing a frantic desire that "Heaven and Earth might perish with him when he died."

Reason and Religion concur in deciding upon the fallacy of human hopes. The one teaches us that to seek for the flowers and fruits of happiness in a thorny wilderness where the research of all

mankind has hitherto been vain is irrational, the other, that it is criminal and displeasing to God. They unite in assuring us

1. That there is something *unsatisfactory* and *empty* in what the world affords. It does not answer the purpose, it does not furnish the enjoyment anticipated. "I have seen an *end* of all perfection." There are those who like Solomon have explored the utmost limits of earthly felicity, but have uniformly assured us that the reports in circulation respecting it are merely the rumours of ignorance and folly. Those who have travelled the *World* have discovered the cheat, and some of these are amongst the wisest of mankind. There are others who will not confess it lest they should incur ridicule and reproach, and because from confirmed habits of Vice they are still unwilling to relinquish their sensual indulgences. Experience is doubtless a test of Truth. If therefore the World were a satisfying portion some one or more might be found who were fully satisfied with it, and felt no desire and no conscious capacity of superior enjoyment; that no such individual is to be found proves that the expectation is only the result of ignorance and folly.

2. There is something *transitory* and *perishing* in "the things which are seen." If the enjoyments of this World were satisfactory in themselves, which they are not, their fading nature would totally annihilate their worth. Destitute therefore at once of solidity and permanency, they must be utterly unworthy of our confidence.

They must necessarily be transitory from the condition of human life. It is a scene of vicissitude, a revolving wheel, an unsettled day, in which the clouds alternately gather and disperse. Whatever is attached to a state of vicissitude and depends upon it, must itself be changing.

They must be so from the constitution of the human mind. However a gross appetite may for a short time be gratified with sensual delight, the mind naturally aspires after something it feels at present beyond its reach, so that it is incapable of being long satisfied with any earthly good. A spirit of immortal grasp cannot confine itself within the narrow circle of sensual appetites.

They are so because Life itself is fleeting and the World is destined to destruction, Life is a vapour, a dream and a shadow. The morning gleam of enjoyment will soon be passed away and give place to the great day of Eternity. Enjoyments perish in the very using, and in defiance of every effort to retain them, soon forsake us, like a bird caught by the fowler, which by the time that infinite pains and assiduity have familiarized it and it begins to please us, drops the wing and expires.

Great tranquillity reigns in the good man's breast in the contemplation of a glorious immortality, but the idea of the dissolution of the present system of things, is alarming to the wicked man. He cannot realize Death without horror, because then all his transitory

bliss perishes, and he trembles in the awful prospect of that day when Time, having finished his course, like another Sampson, will pull down the pillars of the material world, involving himself and all the sinner's pleasure in one mighty ruin.

FAC.

The tendency of the Gospel to promote human happiness illustrated.

PART I. The Certainty of its Principles.

I do not pretend to say, that what I affirm is as infallible as the Pythian Oracle; I speak only by *Conjecture.* CICERO.

We *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. PAUL.

It is obvious that the desire of happiness forms the most powerful principle of our nature. It is universally implanted, and is universally operative. The prince, and the peasant, the saint and the sinner, are equally under its influence. It is impossible however to look into life, and the susceptible heart not be deeply affected with the number and severity of their disappointments. Take the world thro' and that which deserves the name of happiness is but rarely found. It is a flower that is seldom seen, and its fragrance is enjoyed but by few. No one, I presume, would willingly give too dark a picture of the present state of man: but the remarks that have now been made are undoubtedly true. Observation and the oracles of heavenly wisdom stand equally ready to confirm them. Nor can we be at a loss to account for this general failure of human expectation. Before happiness can be truly enjoyed, there must be an adaptation in our pursuits to the principles of our nature; but in the pursuits of the mere man of the world there is no such adaptation, nothing in any way congenial or commensurate with the vast and inextinguishable desires of his soul—In a word, it is in the religion of the Gospel, and there alone, that the mind can repose itself. It is there alone that this burning thirst can be assuaged, and our souls completely filled.

I am fully aware that this has been disputed, and that religion has amongst many received a contrary character, and has been considered as cherishing a disposition to gloom and melancholy, rather than as inspiring cheerfulness and joy: but this is an egregious mistake, and founded, no doubt, on an utter misapprehension of the nature of religion. Besides, it were absurd to consider the opinion which the world may form, as decisive in this case. They are not capable of judging. *The carnal man discerneth not the things of the spirit, for they are spiritually discerned.* It is certainly for the believer, and for him alone, to speak upon this subject. If we would

wish for a just account of religion, let his estimate be taken, and considered, who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, who has drank of the waters of life freely, who has felt the power of religion, especially if such a one has previously entered deeply into the pleasures of the world, has tried it in all forms, examined it under all its possible varieties of pleasing aspect, and exhausted all its powers. And to what conclusion has he arrived? He will tell us that vanity is inscribed in legible characters on every thing below the sun. Such is the estimate that he forms, and that we must receive as truth.

But, Oh! how has the divine Being consulted this governing principle of human nature in the dispensation of the Gospel. Here indeed the benevolence of Deity shines with unclouded effulgence. After examining the character of that system of religion with which he has blest our world, it can never for one moment be doubted that he wills the highest possible felicity of his creatures; that infinite benignity is the grand and adorning attribute of his nature, and must be the governing principle in all his purposes and conduct; or, in other words, it cannot be doubted that the Gospel is in the greatest degree calculated to promote the happiness of man.

This may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, but as we may on some future occasion resume the subject, we will at present confine our remarks to one view of it. The Religion of Christ is in a very high degree calculated to promote the happiness of man, because it banishes from the mind all *doubt and painful suspicions*, as its principles are all distinguished *by the most infallible truth and certainty*.

Scepticism, or a state of doubt and uncertainty of mind with regard to subjects of acknowledged importance, is a state of inexpressible torment. A man in such a state of mind can enjoy no rest, be conscious of no security, nor distinguished by any stability of Character. For ever torn by contending feelings, and agitated by the most tormenting solicitude, his spirit finds no repose. Now the principles of our religion, as they are of the most consolatory kind, are also distinguished by the most absolute certainty. This conviction of their certainty arises from the animating and satisfactory proofs we have of their divinity. If the fulfilment of prophecy, the most stupendous miracles, the sublimest revelations, and the purest morality, are any proofs of the divinity of our religion, they all come forward in aid of our conviction. On this glorious body of evidence we fix our faith, and here it rests unshaken. To which may also be added, the internal witness of its truth, existing in the heart of the true believer, incommunicable indeed to the scoffing infidel, but which to the humble disciple of Christianity stands in the place of a thousand arguments. Hence we can easily account for that ardent attachment to revealed Religion, and assured confidence in its authority, displayed by those of its disciples whose minds are not of an order to render them capable of defending it as a theory, or of

meeting and exposing the Sophisms of Infidelity. We are therefore fully assured of the certainty of the most important principles. All doubts and hesitations are for ever dissipated, and what to the most sagacious and enlightened philosophers amongst the heathens only glimmered, here shines with the most glorious radiance, what in them was but a feeble effort of hope, is with us, the stability of faith.

Even the principles of natural religion, as it is called, or those principles, which the light of nature brings to our view, and which the scriptures do not so much reveal, as pre-suppose and take for granted; even these receive a wonderful accession of strength from the religion of Christ. If the being of a God, for example, be nearly demonstrable by the evidence of his works in nature, how happily *assured* must we be of this glorious and essential truth, when he sends us a written epistle, when we have in our hands a volume, distinguished by the most undoubted marks of his inspiration; to suppose which to be a human production is to admit the greatest contradictions and the most palpable absurdities to which it is possible for the human mind to surrender itself. If it be said here, that the evidence for the being of a God, is so strong from his works, that where this fails to convince, an appeal to the scriptures would prove inefficient; that our convictions of the divine existence must be so established by a survey of nature's wonders as to be incapable of receiving any additional vigour from any other source. We reply, that though nature furnishes us with ten thousand proofs of the divine existence, they are all of one kind. Now whatever proves the inspiration of the scriptures, proves at the same time, the being of a God; but the inspiration of the scriptures rests not upon *one species* of evidence. A variety of proofs *distinct in kind*, and all of equal force, combine to effect in our minds the most solid conviction. It is therefore on this account, that, if we should meet with a man so stupid and infatuated, as *really* not to perceive the force of the argument from the works of nature, we should not despair of convincing him by an appeal to the Scriptures.

The principles of revealed religion, we say, are distinguished by the most infallible certainty. Those truths, which previous to the revelation of the gospel, were involved in mystery and darkness, are now distinctly declared by the authority of heaven, and without any hesitation admitted by every humble believer. And indeed, these truths could never have been made plain to our minds, but by a divine revelation, because, in reasoning upon them, we had no data upon which we could proceed *with certainty*. Nature refused to enlighten us here, and she refused because it was not really in her power. To every argument that might be adduced in favour of the probability of these truths, it would have been at any time sufficient to reply, you cannot demonstrate them—you do not proceed on certain ground, you are guided only by conjecture.

Respecting our immortality and the divine forgiveness, we are now for ever at ease. Revelation has dissipated every obscurity. The immortality of the soul and the forgiveness of our sins are truths written in the Scriptures as with a sun-beam: almost every page is irradiated by their display.

Revelation does not ground these doctrines upon metaphysical speculations, or upon a long train of refined reasoning, for if it did, we should be but little better for its assistance, as such reasonings would be beyond the comprehension of the greatest part of mankind. The Gospel grounds these doctrines on the only possible conclusive principle, and that is the Will of God. Till we have assuredly ascertained his determination with regard to our destiny, no speculations of our own, will ever be able to afford us any satisfaction. The disciple of revealed religion does not, therefore, with the child of nature, perpetually fluctuate between hope and fear. He is not tormented by the most corroding anxiety about his future character and prospects. He feels not for one moment the agitations of fear lest his soul should become extinct at the dissolution of his body, but with regard to all the doctrines of Christianity, can exult and say, "tho' uncertainty hangs on all mortal things, and obscurity too often involves all human speculations, yet here there is no uncertainty, no obscurity. We have heard it from Heaven, that God has so loved the world, as to send his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him may not perish, but obtain eternal life. Yes, the christian may say, I feel no hesitation, nor the torment of doubt,—Christ, by his Gospel, has brought life and immortality to light, and I am invited by God himself, to come up to his throne, and take possession of the blessings of eternity." The best and most enlightened heathens, could never attain to any satisfactory conclusions upon these supremely interesting subjects; but in their writings, where they express their hopes in one page, they express as strongly their doubts in the next. Not so the believer in Christ. With an unfaltering tongue, he can affirm, *though our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day. We know, that if the earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the Heavens. I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day. Blessed be God, even the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*

If then a state of uncertainty and doubt upon these points be attended with such painful solicitude, if it be incompatible, as it most assuredly must be, with tranquillity, security, or stability of character; that religion whose tendency is to settle the mind, by introducing into it the most unhesitating assurance of the sublimest and

most interesting realities, must embrace the highest interests of man, and be an irresistible means of securing to him the most refined and permanent enjoyment. Let then the Christian triumph, though in a world of evil, in the inestimable treasure which Heaven has possessed him. Let him rejoice in those immutable principles of his religion, on which his hopes of immortal blessedness are founded. Nor let him suffer his confidence to be shaken, or his tranquillity disturbed, by the unmanly ridicule, the puerile sophistry, the impious declamation, or the premature triumph of that cruel and infatuated class of men, who, being without God and without hope in the world themselves, employ the most awful assiduity to rob others of those hopes and pleasures, which the impurity and darkness of their own natures alone prevents them from enjoying, "and who are at ease only because they suppose themselves inhabitants of a forsaken and fatherless world."

Exeter. *T. E.*

The State of Backsliders considered.

Mr. Editor,

I am a well-wisher to your Undertaking, and hope it will be extensively useful to our denomination. I have lately inspected the Minutes of the Western Baptist Association, printed at the close of the Circular letters addressed to the churches, from 1795 to the year 1807, both inclusive; and I find that in that period 351 persons have been excluded from the Churches: but the number restored to communion within the same period, amounted to no more than 53, leaving a difference of 298, who once professed repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, but who have lost the advantages of fellowship with his people.

No doubt but these persons were justly excluded, according to the rule which the great Head of the Church has given, *Matt.* xviii. 15—17; *Rom.* xvi. 17, 18; 1 *Cor.* v.; 2 *Thess.* iii. 6. & 14; 1 *Tim.* v. 20; and it is much to the honour of the churches when they execute the Laws of our adorable Legislator upon all delinquents, without partiality; acting as in the sight of God, and by the authority of Christ; thus manifesting their detestation of all Iniquity whether in principle or in practice. This is a very necessary, though painful part of the discipline of the house of God. In its exercise, a clear distinction should be made between the Offender and the Offence. The latter must be detested, but the former should be viewed with an eye of Compassion, and his best Interest earnestly promoted. 1 *Cor.* v. 5.

After all the care and pains that can be taken to separate the precious from the vile, there is reason to fear that many persons will

continue members of churches to the end of their days, who will not be found approved at last. They were admitted to christian communion in the exercise of charity; their brethren hoped they were partakers of regenerating grace, and their outward conduct has not exposed them to the censure of their fellow-creatures. But they have brought forth no real fruit unto God. They have had no true sense of sin, no joy and peace in believing. They experience no vital union to Christ, there is therefore no spiritual life in them. But like the foolish Virgins, they associate with the wise until the Bridegroom cometh; *then* the difference will be made known, and a final separation will take place.

But, is it not more than possible that many of those who have been separated from the Churches are brethren in the best sense of the term? although fallen brethren. Brethren to whom God hath granted repentance unto life—who mourn on account of their iniquity,—whose broken bones the Lord hath healed and caused them to rejoice in his pardoning love, manifesting himself to them as the God of their Salvation. Are they not brethren whom the Lord will acknowledge at the last day? They earnestly desire to be put among his people, and again enjoy the privileges they had justly forfeited by their misconduct. They are now taught, by painful experience, to appreciate the blessings of Gospel fellowship and Gospel ordinances, much more highly that they did before. Whoever has experienced the pain arising from a dislocated joint or a broken bone, will remember with respect and affection, the skilful Surgeon who restored the dislocation or set the fractured bone, but he will not be thereby disposed in any wise to hazard the maiming of his body a second time. He will be thankful for his recovery, but will abhor the thought of being in such a state again.

Some of the Lord's people may have fallen grievously and when separated from the communion of their brethren they have experienced the utility of such discipline. It has produced that godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of. The recollection of their falls keeps them modest, humble, teachable; and they secretly and earnestly long for that restoration which revelation gives them ground to expect. They cannot avoid studying a subject so adapted to their situation, and, enquiring the mind of Christ respecting themselves, the Holy Scriptures enlighten their understandings. Hence their language before God may have been, *Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowlege us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer, thy name is from everlasting. Isaiah* lxiii. 16.

Such Persons should be watched with affection, sympathy and kindness by the brethren: but frequently they meet with very opposite behaviour from them.—Shyness, suspicion, distance, and

reserve. The language of such conduct seems to be, *Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou.* Another says, "I fear that, if they are restored, they will be both a trouble and reproach to us"—another decides, "Let them stand as they are;" and adds this curious reason, "If they are partakers of grace, want of fellowship with us will not exclude them from heaven." All this may appear very plausible; nevertheless what saith the scripture? Let us hearken, *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*" *Gal.* vi. 1; *Sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted of many, so that contrary-wise ye ought rather to forgive him and comfort him, lest such an one should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love towards him.* 2 *Cor.* ii. 6, 7, 8. See also, 2 *Thess.* iii. 14, 15; *Heb.* xii. 12, 13. It is very evident that the directions given in these Scriptures are adverse to the reasoning and practice before mentioned. The Scriptures are the only standard of faith and conduct, from which there can be no appeal. Therefore the reasoning and practice which have been recited must be wrong.

Jesus Christ predicted both Peter's fall and his recovery, Luke xxiii. 31—34; and added, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* From which it is fair to infer that our Lord knew that Peter would be less confident, and possess more tenderness and sympathy for those who might fall through the force of temptation. Every fallen professor should be looked after, and means used to restore them, the welfare of the offenders should be sought, and then the glory of God will be promoted. Should the offender be rich or poor, possessing useful talents or not, whether in a public or private station, his restoration should be promoted according to the prescribed rule. It is feared that our Churches are sometimes deprived of the use of talents which might be of great advantage, by neglecting that part of discipline here pleaded for. Noah, Aaron, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Peter, were all backsliders; but the Lord restored them, and made them useful in their day and generation.

No charge exhibited against a member of a Gospel Church, if that charge is confessed, repented of, and forsaken, should prevent his restoration. If it be objected that notwithstanding these things are true, yet it is feared they may be abused, and therefore it is safe not to say any thing about them. It is replied, Jehovah is infinitely wise,—and he hath revealed his mind concerning these matters; it is therefore most safe and most honourable to confide in his wisdom, and implicitly obey his directions.

Should this necessary, but much neglected, part of Christian discipline become the subject of more extensive thought and investigation, so as to bring the practice of our churches, in this respect, near-

er the divine rule, then will the sheep that are gone astray be brought again to the fold, to the great joy of their hearts—it will be pleasing to the great Shepherd, because agreeable to his word,—it will give pleasure to the whole body, and prove highly gratifying to,

PHILOGOTHON.

Obituary.

MRS. PORTER.

Mrs. Jane Porter, late wife of J. P. Porter, Pastor of the Baptist Church at Bath, departed this life August 18, 1808; aged 47. She was a native of Guildford in Surry, and at about the age of 21 was led to attend the ministry of the late Mr. John Chamberlain, Pastor of the Baptist Congregation in that Town, and the Lord was pleased to render his ministry efficacious in turning her from darkness to light. Her convictions were deep, they could not be hid. Many oppositions she experienced in the commencement of her pilgrimage, but the Lord gave her strength according to her day. Embracing the Gospel of God her Saviour, she found the Redeemer to be (what every believing soul experiences) *a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.* The holy Spirit enlightened her understanding to see the beauty and glory of Jesus Christ, and to rely wholly on his blood and righteousness for her Salvation. She was baptized, with her husband in the Summer of 1789, at Wokingham, Berks, by Mr. Thomas Davis, of Reading. She was united in fellowship with the Baptist Church at Guildford, and so continued till her removal by Providence to Bath, in consequence of her husband's being invited to the Pastoral office in that city.

She was the subject of much affliction for eleven years. Her sufferings were very great, and her support was great also. Many Christian friends found it good to visit her, for in her *they saw the Grace of God and were glad.* Although confined to her chamber, she was a Mother in Israel, and young Persons seeking the Lord found in her a valuable friend and counsellor. Some friends used to meet every Lord's day evening in her chamber to spend an hour in social prayer. These meetings were profitable to herself and to others, as the recollection of many testifies. But as her weakness increased she was unable to continue them, and they were relinquished.

The Lord brought her by slow degrees to the house appointed for all living. She well knew that death was approaching, and conversed on that subject with the greatest freedom. The fear of death was entirely removed, so that she could meet it as a friend to conduct her to Glory. Nevertheless she had her infirmities, and felt and lamented them before God. A Friend who was standing by her being deeply affected with her sufferings, took occasion to admire the patience manifested in enduring affliction so sharp and long without complaint; at which she was much displeased, and replied, "Do not say so, I am a poor fretful creature, and my nature is very vile indeed; if it were not so, I should not need so much refining. My heavenly Father would not lay upon me so much affliction if it were not absolutely necessary, for he doth not

willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men."

Her latter days were not rapturous, but they were happy; steadily relying upon the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. To a female friend who watched her many nights in the most affectionate manner, she once said, "I have had this night a prelude of heaven for an hour." Her countenance was pleasant, indicating the happy frame of her mind, and many sweet sentences dropped from her lips shewing that she was rich in faith and ripe for Glory. She applied the lines of Dr. Watts to herself,

Now I am dead to all the Globe,
And all the Globe is dead to me.

The last words she was heard to articulate were

Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,
I love to hear of thee,
No Music like thy charming name,
Nor half so sweet can be.

This was about 16 hours before her departure. After this she lay dozing without any signs of pain, and at 12 at noon her soul left the afflicted body, and entered into the joy of her Lord, while her partner in life with the friend above-mentioned were watching her last moments. They then, with the neice of the deceased (whom she had brought up from her infancy and tenderly loved) kneeled down and prayed and blessed the Lord for the Grace bestowed upon the deceased, the support granted her, and the deliverance she had just experienced from all pain and sorrow. The feelings of these survivors were wound up to the keenest sensibility. May the awful, pleasing, painful impressions never be effaced.

"O the soft commerce! O the tender ties
Close twisted with the fibres of the heart!
Which broken break them, & drain off the soul
Of human joys, and make it pain to live.
And is it thus to live? when such friends part
'Tis the Survivor dies."

Mr. Barnard, of Bradford, addressed the Congregation at the Interment, on the 23rd, and the Lord's day following improved the event to a crowded assembly, from the text she had fixed on for that service, Job xix, 25—27.

MRS. ELIZABETH MILES.

Mrs. Elizabeth Miles, a respectable Member of the Baptist Church in Eagle Street, London, died on the 28th day of October last, after a long illness. Her solid peace and rapturous joy in the prospect of dissolution, has left a powerful impression on the minds of all who witnessed her latter days, that there is a reality in Religion, and that it is not a vain thing to serve God.

By a Letter from her husband to the Pastor of the Church above-mentioned, it appears that, when a Child, she used often to engage in prayer from the impressions upon her conscience that God ought to be worshipped, but she never felt acutely on account of sin, or her need of salvation till she arrived at years of maturity. These convictions were produced by many and painful afflictions. She trembled in prospect of death and judgment, being convinced she was destitute of any righteousness that could justify her at the bar of God. Contrary to all expectation, the Lord graciously restored her; but she then grew careless about her soul, and her deep convictions of sin gradually wore away.

Her husband farther relates, "On a Lord's Day Morning about two years ago, we were going to the Adelphi, our usual place of worship, but as the weather was

wet, I prevailed on her, after great difficulty (as she did not like the Minister) to turn in at Eagle-Street Meeting. When for the first time she heard to real profit, all her dislike to the preacher vanished, now the arm of the Lord was revealed, and she was led as a lost sinner to believe on the name of the Son of God." From that day she became a regular attendant at that place, and after a time was introduced to the Pastor by some of the Members, as a serious person who was desirous of being baptized and joining their communion. But excessive timidity preventing her from speaking freely of her experience in the things of God, he hesitated to comply with her request. Some Months after, her intimate friends again applying on her behalf, and her husband also approving of her design, and speaking in the most satisfactory manner of the propriety of her conduct and the sincerity of her profession; the Pastor enquired of her "On a supposition that the church should not agree to receive you, how would you feel, should you be offended?" "Not at all," she replied, "the Church have a right to object if they think proper, but they will not prevent my attending the preaching of the Gospel among them, and I am determined not to leave the place though I should not be received into communion."

When she related her experience, tho' she had previously many fears, yet she now enjoyed peculiar liberty in declaring the goodness and mercy of the Lord towards her. The stammering tongue was unloosed, she was heard with the greatest pleasure, and received with the most cordial approbation. This is mentioned as an encouragement to timid christians to adopt David's language. "*Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul;* and as a caution to Ministers and Churches, that they despise not the weak, nor act contrary to his spirit who *gathered the lambs with his arm and carried them in his bosom.*

The happiness she enjoyed during her last illness is indescribable, and what we are able to relate of it falls so far short of the reality, that none who visited her will consider it either as an eulogy on the deceased, or as flattery to the living, but as a tribute of gratitude to the Lord who by his grace produced it. In the former part of her affliction she was very dark and distressed respecting her state, attended with a strong presentiment that she should never recover. But a few weeks before her death she had such clear discoveries of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ to save sinners, and such enjoyment arising from depending upon his atonement as a sacrifice for sin as was truly remarkable.

This rapture, which she could not apparently suppress, was attended with great humility and much self-examination. "Do you think it possible," she would often say "that I am deceiving myself? surely I could not give myself these enjoyments and this peace of soul, so different from what I used to feel." Her conversation was intirely on the amazing love of Christ to her. She remarked, "the Saviour has said, *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.* I am as a little child before him, I am very weak in myself, but he has said, *Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* I go to him for salvation, and I believe he will not cast me out."

When hardly able to speak she would make her friends sing some Hymns she was very fond of, and unite in it with great delight. "I

look upon myself" she would say, as one of the greatest of sinners, and but a very weak believer, but

A feeble saint shall win the day,
Tho' Death and Hell obstruct the way.

"Fear not," she added to a friend who visited her, "fear not, the Lord will be with you as he has been with me." To which Mr. B. (a Deacon of the Church) replied, "O that my Soul were in your Soul's stead." "I am highly favoured" she replied, "yes, I am."

She was asked, if her expectations arose from any thing she had done? "O no," she replied "I have done nothing, the Lord hath done all things for me; all my hopes arise from the work of the Saviour, who, I hope, hath loved me and given himself for me." On the afternoon of the same day, Friday, she said, "There is nothing in this world worth living for, I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. But it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom." In the evening, an apprentice who was very much attached to her, came to her bed-side. "James," said she, "I am just going, I shall be in heaven before sunday, and have begun singing the everlasting song, *Worthy is the Lamb.*"

A few minutes before her death, which was the next morning at 9 o'Clock, she said "feel my hands and my face." This her attendant did not attend to, when putting her cold hand with great difficulty to her forehead, she said "Do you think I am going now? Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." Then taking an affectionate farewell of a female friend, and a very doubting christian, she said "Do not think you are not in the covenant because you do not feel as I do, but do sing; I shall soon join the choirs of the redeemed. It is sweet—it is a fountain—O what I am going to enjoy with that company. A few minutes after she again said "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Glory, Glory." These were her last words and she fell aleep. Reader you must die, and in order to your enjoying such happiness you must believe in the same Almighty Saviour, and depend on his work alone for salvation. "*Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.*

FOUR AGED MINISTERS.

The following venerable Servants of our Lord finished their labours, which had been highly valued among our Welsh brethren, in the course of last year.

1. Rev. Morgan Rees. He was a member of the Church at Velin-voel almost 70 years; he began to preach in 1744, and was ordained (together with Mr. John Duckfield) in 1760. He was a good christian, a diligent preacher, and a faithful pastor. He resided in Glamorganshire, not far from Bryn-Salem, and was also of much service to that Church; but he preached very seldom the four last years of his life, because of his Infirmities. He died in peace at the age of 84 years. He was never married.

2. Rev. David Evans. He was baptized at Kilvowir when very young, began to preach when he was but 18 years of age, and laboured in the work of the ministry 67 years. He was ordained in 1761 (together with Mr. Lewis Thomas and Mr. James Lodwick.) He maintained an unblameable character thro' his whole life, and was a very popular preacher in his day. He went thro' many tribulations towards his heavenly home, but continued to preach to the last,

wearing his own hair and reading the smallest print without spectacles. As he was returning home he fell into a quarry near his own house, where he was found dead the following morning. He died at the age of 85 years, and was buried at Kilvowir.

3. Rev. John Richards. He was an original Member of the Church at Graig when it separated from Panteg; he began to preach very early, and after a few years was ordained (together with David Evans now of Maesyberllan.) He was carried off by a fever after a few days illness, aged above 60 years.

4. Rev. Owen Rees, of Darkgate, Carmarthen. He was the first who was baptized at Carmarthen in the last century. There was a Church in that place in the time of Cromwell, formed, probably, about the year 1649, but dispersed by the persecutions under Charles II. The late Mr. Timothy Thomas of Aberduar hired a house in the Town about the year 1762. Owen Rees was baptized in 1763; he soon after began to preach, and was ordained about the year 1787. He was a sober, judicious man, a warm advocate for the doctrines of grace, heavenly in his conversation, and had much of the divine presence in his long illness before his death; from which he recovered in some degree, so that a fortnight before his death he preached at Ferry-side, 9 miles from home, and the last Lord's day of his life he preached at Darkgate. The Saturday following (July 16, 1808.) he finished his course with joy, aged 68 years. He was buried at Pennel Meeting, Carmarthen, and Mr. Titus Lewis preached on the occasion from *Phil.* iii. 21.

Rev. ENOCH FRANCIS.

He was Pastor of the Baptist Church at Exeter for 13 Years, and afterwards of a Church at Wantage, Berks, for 3 Years. The last time he spoke in public was in June last, at Broad Mead, Bristol. His health had been on the decline for some time past, and his Physicians advised him to try the benefit of Bath Waters. There the best medical advice was obtained, but medical skill proved useless. In three weeks after his arrival (October 9, 1808,) he resigned his soul into the hands of his Redeemer. His body was interred in the Baptist Burying-ground at Bath, and his death improved the following Lord's day by the Rev. J. P. Porter, in a sermon from *Heb.* ix. 27, 28.

WILLIAM HEMMING.

On the 3rd of Nov. last died Mr. William Hemming of Astwood, near Feckenham, Worcestershire. Altho' he had been from his youth of a sober turn of mind, and had on that account secured the good opinion of his neighbours, who considered *religion* and *sobriety* as terms in every view of precisely the same import; yet the Bible does not appear to have pronounced him a Christian till near the age of thirty. At this time, Mr. Spencer, then Minister of the Baptist Congregation at Alcester, began to preach in the vicinity of Astwood. His labours were highly useful in enlightening and convincing Mr. H.'s mind, as to the nature of Evangelical piety. He now attended the public worship of God with the people just refered to; and soon became a member

of their society. In 1798 he was requested to officiate as Deacon among them: and this office he honourably filled as long as he continued in the world.

For the last two or three years, his bodily strength had been gradually declining. All the means that could be devised in the hope of restoration were adopted. But the Sovereign disposer of all events saw fit to cross the wishes of an anxious family, and to bring his Servant, in the 54th year of his age, to the dust of death.—The weakness of Mr. H's body, towards the last, was so great that his friends, though grieved, were not surprised, to perceive a measure of intellectual debility, as the consequence. The power of Evangelical faith, however, remained; and those intervals which *allowed* the professsion of a good hope of heaven, *produced* it. He had nothing like rapture in the prospect of immortality; neither had he any thing like fear. He had exerted himself in many instances to promote the cause of religion among mankind: but he disavowed dependance on any other foundation than that which God hath laid in Sion, even Jesus Christ the righteous. In the near view of eternity, tho' conscious of his unworthiness as a sinner, he believed, and his weeping friends believed with him, that, on the ground of a free redemption effected by the Lord Jesus, a state of perfect happiness awaited him in heaven. And on the day of his interment, the sentiment of the passage used on that occasion as a text, (*Rev.* xiv. 13.) operated in a way of consolation to the minds of many; assuring them that "*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.*"

Let the reader, if governed by the same religious principles, rejoice in the expectation of the same felicity. And should these few lines (which were not designed as a eulogium, but merely to record an additional instance of the value of true piety in dying circumstances) meet the eye of some vain and careless sinner; let him know that a peaceful death can be expected only by such as live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of God's holy Name.

Astwood. *J. S.*

QUERY.

Mr. Editor,

I shall feel myself greatly obliged to you for inserting, and to any of your Correspondents for answering the following question, Are the female members of a Christian Church allowed by the New Testament to express a vote in the choice of Deacons?

A reply to the above, as soon as convenient, would be of practical utility to me and several of my friends. And whenever it may suit any who have engaged to support your recent and laudable undertaking, to send you their thoughts on *The Christian law in general, relative to the share which pious women may or may not take in the transactions of a Church as such;* the labour of love will be esteemed, and the obligation felt,

by yours, &c.

TAPEINOS.

ACCOUNT OF RELIGIOUS PUBLICATIONS.

Hints on the Education of Children. By John Fawcett, A. M. *third edition.* Button, London. 3*d.*

Conscious that there is scarcely any thing of equal importance with the education of youth, the public mind has of late years been greatly drawn to this subject, and treatises relating to it in considerable numbers, and of various merits, have been presented to our notice. In writing a treatise upon Education there are several errors into which we are liable to run. Some, regarding Man merely in the light of a being destined to move for awhile in the social circle, have too much excluded from their systems a regard for religious tuition as forming Man for Immortality, and preparing him for that period when the relations he now sustains in the present world shall be for ever dissolved. Others have gone somewhat into the opposite extreme, and have not at sufficient length or with adequate precision, considered the relations which Man at present bears to Society, and the duties which those relations involve. Some again, considering Man solely in a metaphysical light, have deduced their systems from the theories they have formed of the human mind, which being necessarily obscure, must considerably lessen the value of their productions. Again, other plans of education, are formed upon rules which betray too great an ignorance of the laws of our nature, and too great an indifference to their authority.

With regard to the present little manual, which the venerable author modestly styles "Hints," we have remarked that they are very plain, practical, and important, and are worthy the perusal of every Parent and Guardian of youth. They are written with great affection and fervour, and display at once the piety and warm philanthropy of their author. For the foundation of these seasonable hints he has selected the appropriate direction of a wise man, *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* In the Introduction are some remarks on the importance of a proper education of Children, and the author evidently felt every sentence he wrote. The subject is divided into ten sections. 1. Train up a child in the knowledge and service of God. 2. In acts of justice and honesty towards his fellow-creatures. 3. In habits of tenderness, kindness, and compassion. 4. To speak the truth on all occasions. 5. In a just abhorrence of all profane and impious language. 6. In obedience to just authority. 7. To habits of Industry. 8. In the proper government of himself, his humours, and passions. 9. In good manners, and a decent behaviour towards all with whom he has to do. 10. Train up a Child not only by precept but by example. It is obvious that the author has here marked out a wide field for very interesting dissertation, and we lament that his other engagements did not permit the enlargement of his work. It is hardly necessary to say that what is here done is done well. The importance of the subject appears to have made deep impressions on the writer's mind, and these give an energy to the sentiments expressed, that cannot

fail of interesting the pious reader in a great degree.

The Style is without ornament, but not dull; neat, but not precise. It is the style of one whose ideas of his subject are distinct, and who wishes to impress its fullest importance on others. It offers itself a kind of manual for the serious heads of families, and is well adapted for general usefulness. The lovers of refinement will find nothing beneath their notice in these hints, and the most simple may be assured they are level to their comprehension. We therefore warmly recommend it to the attention of our readers, confident that it can never be properly perused without advantage.

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Evangelical Advice and Encouragement. *A farewell Discourse addressed to a Congregation in Ebenezer Chapel, Truro, October* 2, 1808. By Benjamin Coxhead, Button. 1*s.*

As the labours of a Gospel Minister embrace the most important interests of the people among whom he is placed; the dissolution of their connection, though existing but for a short perod, suggest many serious enquiries to the consciences of all parties. Hence, wise and good ministers of Jesus Christ (from the days of the Apostles until now) have thought it suitable, when in prospect of separation, to take leave of their hearers with a valedictory address.

Mr. Coxhead has followed so commendable an example, and we are highly pleased with his discourse. The text is *Phil.* i. 27, 28. *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries.* The Sermon founded on these words commends itself by its perspicuity, candour, fidelity, and zeal. It is indeed a very pious and judicious performance, well adapted to the circumstances in which it was delivered; and certainly does credit to the judgment and talents of the preacher.

But we are still more gratified by the consideration of what is *not* in this sermon. On such occasions, it has sometimes happened, that the preacher, under pretence of self-defence, has taken occasion to repeat old grievances, and utter many unadvisable things. Probably, if Mr. C. had indulged in such a strain, he might have blotted a page or two; but he very properly observes that, "disputes "and differences among professors "are in general far better buried "in oblivion, than published upon "the house-tops,"—and when he adds, "I am conscious that I had "rather bear unmerited reproach, "than give occasion against pro-"fessors, or against the gospel;" our hearts are warmed with some very kind affections towards the christian minister who breathes so much the Spirit of his Master.

This Sermon ought to find its way beyond the circle of their connections to whom it was delivered. Many Ministers might read it to advantage, and all hearers might be profited by its contents.

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Religious Books lately published.

1. Letters to a Person baptized on a Profession of Faith. *Fourth edition.* Burditt. *Common, sewed,* 6*d.* *Fine, in neat boards,* 1*s.*

2. The Nature and Extent of Christian Liberty; *a Letter to the Members of Religious Societies.* By J. Fawcett, A.M. Button. 4d.

3. The Holiness which becometh the House of the Lord *considered, in a Discourse delivered at the opening of the New Place of Worship in New York Street, Manchester.* By John Fawcett, A. M. Button. 6d.

4. The Conversion of God's antient People, the Jews. *An Address delivered at Worship-street, Oct. 2, 1808, upon the Baptism, by immersion, of Mr. Isaac Littleter, one of the Israelitish Nation, on his profession of Christianity: to which is prefixed an Account of his Conversion.* By John Evans, A. M. 1*s.*

5. The New Whole Duty of Prayer, containing 56 Family Prayers, suitable for Morning and Evening for every day in the week; and a variety of other Devotions and Thanksgivings, for particular Persons, Circumstances, and Occasions. Burditt, Button, &c. 4*s.* 6d.

6. A Brief Narrative of the Baptist Mission in India. Burditt and Button. 1*s.*

7. Quarle's Emblems and the School of the Heart, in 2 vols. boards. 146 Engravings. 16*s.*

THEOLOGICAL NOTICES.

☞ Information of works in hand from Theological Writers will be inserted under this Article.

A new edition of the Confession of Faith of "the Ministers and Messengers of above one hundred Baptized Congregations in England and Wales," first published in 1689, is now in the Press.

Shortly will be published, The Life of Mr. John Bunyan, containing his Grace abounding to the chief of Sinners, an account of his Imprisonment, Conversation before the Justices, &c. first published from his own Manuscripts in 1765, and Remarks on his Character and Writings, with a fine Portrait. By Joseph Ivimey.

Also, by the same Author, The History of Baptism, or an Appeal to the Scriptures and History for Information on that Subject, in Dialogues between a Baptist and a Pædobaptist. With a frontispiece representing the Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch.

We understand that the History of the Welsh Baptists, by the late Mr. Thomas of Leominster, is about to be reprinted. The Editors are also collecting materials for continuing it to the present time.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

WELSH ASSOCIATIONS.

The South-east Baptist Association met at Nantgwyn in Radnorshire, the first week in June last. The Churches belonging to this Association are 30 in Number. They assembled on Tuesday, at 3 o'clock. After prayer by brother J. Edmonds, the letters from the churches were read, by which it appears they are in peace and unity. Brother D. Richards preached from *Matt.* xvii. 5.

On Wednesday, Six Sermons were preached by the Brethren J. Heier, T. Evans *of Caerleon*, C. Evans *of Anglesey*, E. Jones, Micah Thomas and James Lewis, from *Isa.* li, 3. 1 *Cor.* x, 13. 1 *Cor.* xiii. 13. *Nehem.* ix. 17. *Matt.* ix, 6. and *Psa.* lxxxix, 15. respectively. Prayer at Intervals.

Thursday, Brother J. Davies began by Prayer; The Letter to the Churches on *The Moral Law a rule of life*, was read and ordered to be printed. It was agreed, 1. To receive the new church at Abergavenny into the Association. 2. To make collections in the churches in aid of the Welsh church in London. 3. Also in aid of the academy at Abergavenny. 4. Also in aid of a new Meeting-house for the Church at Cardiff. 5. That the Minister at Comtown should be permitted to collect for the new Meeting-house at Bridge-end. 6. To hold a meeting for Prayer and Praise, in all the Churches, at the month's end after the Association. Brother J. Evans *of Penygarn*, concluded the Association with Prayer.

State of the Churches the Year preceding the Association. Baptized, 409. Restored, 42. Received by Letter, 2. Excluded, 90. Died, 47. Dismissed, 3. Clear Increase, 313.

The next Association to be held at Zion's Chapel, Merthyr-Tydvil the first week in June, 1809.

THE WESTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION met at Cardigan, the second week in June last. The Churches belonging to this Association are 39 in Number. They assembled on Tuesday at 3 o'clock. After Prayer by J. James *of Aberystwith*, the letters from the churches were read, by which it appears the churches are in peace, great additions have been made to many of them, and instead of the Fathers (whose departure is recorded in our former pages) ministerial gifts appear in the younger members of several Societies. Brethren B. Davies of *Ffynon*, and D. Evans of *Dolau* preached severally from *Ps.* xvi, 2, 3, and John xii, 35.

On Wednesday, Eight Sermons were delivered. One in the Morning, (a charge to Ministers) by Brother Z. Thomas, from 2 *Tim.* ii, 15. Three in the Forenoon by Brethren J. Harries, B. Davies *of Haverford-west*, and D. Richards, from 1 *John* iv, 19. 1 *Pet.* iii, 18; and 2 *Cor.* viii, 9. Two in the Afternoon by Brethren J. and C. Evans, from *Luke* xxiv, 26, and 1 *Cor.* xv, 55—57, and two in the Evening by Brethren S. Breeze and J. Watkins, from *John* v, 25, and *John* i, 14. Prayer and Singing at proper intervals.

Thursday, Brother W. Williams prayed, the Letter to the Churches, *On the right hearing of the word of God*, was read and agreed to be printed. Also, agreed 1 To collect for the Welsh Baptist Church in London. 2 For the Academy at Abergavenny. 3. That J. Harries and T. Davies be permitted to collect money among the churches to defray the expences of their new chapels; and that collections be made for the new meeting house at Cardiff, and brought to the next Association. 4. That a meeting for prayer and thanksgiving be held in the churches at the month's end, after the Association, Brother M. Jones concluded with Prayer.

State of the Churches the year preceding this Meeting. Baptized 642. Restored 114. Received by letter, 1. Excluded, 144. Died, 141. Dismissed, 3. Clear Increase, 469.

The next Association to be held

at Haverford-west, the second week in June, 1809.*

The North Wales Baptist Association met at Ruthin in Denbighshire, the last week in June. We are not informed of the number of churches. The Preachers at this Association were Brethren J. James and S. Breeze *of Aberystwith*, Henry Davies *of Llangloffan*, James Perrot *of Hengoed*, W. Roberts, *Carnarvon*, C. Evans, *Anglesey*, and — Thompson *of Warrington*. The clear Increase in this Association, in the year preceding this meeting was 60.†

The next Association to be held at Almwch, in the Isle of Anglesey, the last Week in June, 1809.

A Brief Account of English Associations in our next.

ORDINATIONS, &c.

Mr. Daniel Nicolas, late a Member of the Church at Rhydwilym, was ordained, in May last, over the Baptist Church at Graig, Carmarthenshire. Mr. B. Davis *of Kilvowir*, introduced the exercises of the day, Mr. Evan Jones *of Cardigan*, delivered the introductory discourse, and offered the ordination prayer, Mr. Titus Lewis *of Carmarthen*, gave the charge from 1 *Tim.* iv. 16. Mr. Joshua Watkins *of Carmarthen*, addressed the church from 1 *Thes.* v. 12, 13, and J. Morgan *of Blaenyfos* preached from *Heb.* ix. 28.

Messrs. D. Saunders and Timothy Thomas, *Aberduar*, preached the preceding evening.

The Rev. Thomas Edmonds, M. A. was ordained Pastor over the Baptist Church at Exeter, the 14th of September last. The Rev. W. Grey *of Dock*, delivered the introductory discourse; Mr. E. then read a lucid sketch of the principal articles of his christian belief; the Rev. J. Nicholson *of Kingsbridge*, prayed the ordination prayer; Dr. Ryland gave a very solemn and affectionate Charge from *Acts* xx. 28. *Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.* The Rev. J. Birt offered the people some very seasonable counsels from 1 *Cor.* xvi. 10. *See that he may be with you without fear.* The Rev. Mr. Waters *of London*, preached in the Evening from *Prov.* iv. 18. *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

Rev. T. Smith *of Tiverton*, preached the preceding Evening from *Phil.* ii. 11. *That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father.*

The Services of the day were exceedingly interesting and highly gratifying to many, and we understand that this Church with their Pastor enjoy very pleasing prospects of harmony and usefulness. *Send now, O Lord, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.*

* The number baptized in these associations in the year ending June, 1807, was in the South-east, 566, and in the West, 1117. Baptisms in both associations the two last years, 2734.

† We should have been happy in receiving more particulars respecting our Brethren in North Wales.

THE REV. JAMES HARGREAVES from Ogden, near Rochdale, Lancashire, has lately accepted the unanimous call of the Baptist Church, in George Street, Hull, after having spent four or five months with them.

The Congregation had been gradually declining for some years before, under the ministry of Mr. Lyons, who, at length avowed a change in his religious sentiments, gave up his charge, and went amongst the Socinians. But the place is now well attended, and there is a pleasing prospect of happiness and prosperity. The members of the Church, who had been divided respecting their late minister, are now restored to unanimity and peace, having parted with those who had imbibed Mr. L.'s sentiments.

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PUBLIC MEETINGS,

PLACES OPENED, &c.

Aug. 2, 1808. A new place of worship was opened at Comb-Hay, a village three miles from Bath. In the morning Mr. Williams *of Bradford* preached from *Matt.* xviii. 20. *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* In the afternoon Mr. Finly (Lady Huntingdon's, Bath) preached from *Matt.* xi. 5. *The poor have the gospel preached to them;* and in the evening Mr. Porter *of Bath* preached from *Acts* xi. 21. *And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* The place was crowded, and many could not enter. Much of the divine presence was enjoyed. The place is supplied by the united efforts of the Baptists, Mr. Jay's and the Countess of Huntingdon's congregations, at Bath.

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Sept. 6, 1808. A new Meeting-house was opened in the Village of TWERTON, near Bath. The Gospel was introduced into that place, about 4 years since, by a zealous person called in providence to reside there. A house was rented and fitted up for public worship; which was supplied by Brethren from the Baptist Church at Bath. Preaching was constantly kept up twice on Lord's days and on Tuesday evenings. The word was owned of God, many attended, and some experienced the power of divine grace. As the congregation increased, the place was too small; the present building was erected, and will contain about 300 hearers. It is vested in the hands of Trustees.

On the above day Mr. Fiest *of Devizes*, preached in the morning from *Ps.* cxxxii. 14, 15: Mr. Hutchings *of Keynsham*, in the afternoon from *Prov.* xxii. 20, 21; and Mr. Noyse *of Pewsey*, in the evening, from *Isa.* li. 11. In various intervals Mr. Finly (Lady Huntingdon's), Mr. Opie Smith *of Bath*, Mr. Bulgin *of Poole*, and Mr. Dobney, *of Malmsbury*, engaged in prayer.

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Sept. 28. 1808. The half-yearly meeting of the Ministers and Gentlemen united to support Village preaching in the western district of the Western Association, met at TIVERTON, Devon. Mr. Cherry *of Wellington*, preached in the morning from *Ps.* ii. 8. *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* The afternoon was devoted to the

business of the Meeting, and in the evening Mr. Edmonds preached from *Prov.* iii. 17. *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*

After public service, Mr. Cherry was unanimously requested to print his sermon delivered in the forenoon; and the expedience of publishing a *Baptist Magazine* (which had been voted a desideratum last year) was taken into consideration, and after much discussion, it was unanimously resolved, immediately to take the measures calculated to unite as much as possible of the piety and talent of the denomination in support of such a work. The next morning a plan for this purpose, and for conducting the proposed publication, was discussed and arranged. HENCE AROSE THE BAPTIST MAGAZINE. An undertaking which the Managers are now assured accords with the wishes of a great proportion of their Brethren in all parts of the kingdom.

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Sept. 29, 1808. A neat little place of worship was opened at St. Hill, Kentisbeer, Devon, under the patronage of the brethren assembled at Tiverton the day before. Mr. Opie Smith preached in the afternoon from *Mark* xvi. 20. *And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following;* and in the evening Mr. Toms *of Chard*, preached from *Ps.* cxxxiii. 3. *For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.* The house (which will hold abeut 130) was extremely crowded each service, and there is the most encouraging prospect of usefulness.

This place is supplied by Mr. Humphrey, late *of Stogumber*, who removed to *Cullompton* about 16 months since, under whose ministry it has pleased God to effect a considerable revival of religion in that town and neighbourhood; 200 regular hearers have been added to the congregation, 29 baptized, and thrice that number have expressed a serious concern about their eternal welfare. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory.*

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Oct. 4, 1808. The quarterly meeting of the Shropshire association was held at Bridgenorth. They assembled at 6 in the evening, and brother Thomas *of Brosely*, preached from 2 *Pet.* iii. 13. *We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

Next morning at half past 10, public service commenced with prayer by brother Thomas, brother Palmer preached from *Isa.* xlv. 22—25. *Look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth, &c.* The Business of the meeting was transacted in the afternoon, and the brethren were informed that their friends at Shrewsbury have taken a large room in a part of the town where there is no preaching, and many inhabitants; where it is intended to establish a weekly lecture. In the evening brother Price, Pastor of the second church at *Brosely*, preached from *Phil.* ii. 13. *It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

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Oct. 23, 1808. Lord's day evening, a part of a house in *Robin-hood-lane, Poplar, near London*, being duly registered, was opened for public worship by *Dr. Rippon.* The Baptist Ministers in London have agreed to assist in rotation. Neighbouring Ministers of various

denominations, have also assisted in the establishment of a Wednesday evening lecture, which was opened in the same place, Nov. 10th, by *Mr. Williams of Rose-lane, Ratcliff.* Many hearers have attended, and it is hoped friends will not be wanting, who will give this new labour of love a firm and effectual support.

NEW CHURCH
At Hartly Row, Hants.

About three years ago the gospel was introduced into the Village of Hartly Row, Hants, which was attended with so much success, that it soon became necessary to erect a Meeting for the accommodation of numbers that attended. A divine blessing has since followed the ministry of the word, so that indeed, *the spirit is poured out from on high, the wilderness is become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted for a forest.* Numbers who have heard, have *believed, were baptized, and added to the Church* at Reading. The word of the Lord still ran and was glorified, their numbers were increasing, and their distance from the Church to which they were united being 12 miles; they resolved upon forming themselves into a distinct society, and accordingly by a letter to the Church at Reading, requested their dismission for that purpose; which was granted.

Monday, Nov. 7, 1808, (being that very day three years since the gospel was first introduced as above mentioned) was appropriated to their formation. Mr. J. Holloway *of Reading*, introduced the exercises of the day with prayer, and afterwards described the nature and privileges of a Gospel Church, read their letter requesting their dismission, and the answer complying with their request, together with the covenant which as a church they resolved to adopt. He then gave them the right hand of fellowship, as they did also to each other. Mr. T. Arnold, *late of Seven-oaks*, Kent, then prayed for a blessing on the new-formed Church; Mr. Holloway addressed them from *Acts* ii. 42. *And they continued stedfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.* Mr. P. Davis *of Wokingham* concluded this service with prayer. Afternoon Mr. Saunders, *late of Poole*, prayed, Mr. Meffin *of Odiham* preached from *John* xv. 26. *He shall testify of me;* and Mr. J. Millard concluded this highly interesting series of exercises with prayer.

List of Lectures, &c. in and near London, for January.

1. *Lord's day Ev.* Broad St. Mr. G. Clayton.
4. *Wed. Ev.* Prayer Meeting for the Nation at Mr. J. Clayton's.
5. *Thurs. M.* Monthly Meeting (Indep.) at Mr Humphreys's, Mr. Webb to preach. *The demerit of sin demonstrated in the Cross of Christ.*

8. *Lord's day Ev.* Broad St. Mr. Hughes.
11. *Wed. Ev.* Prayer Meeting for the Nation at Mr. Humphreys's.
13. *Fri. Ev.* Sermon to Young Persons, at Crown Court, by Mr. Gore. *A Clean Heart.*

15. *Lord's day Ev.* Broad St. Mr. Gaffee.
18. *Wed. Ev.* Prayer Meeting for the Nation at Mr. J. Thomas's.

22. *Lord's day Ev.* Broad St. Mr. Dore.
25. *Wed. Ev.* Prayer Meeting for the Nation at Mr. Burder's.

Smith, Printer, Tiverton.